

Memorandum

To: Planning Commission

From: Lori Peckol, Manager, Long Range Planning

Date: March 27, 2015

Subject: **Draft Proposed Approach for Planning Commission's Review and Recommendation on Updates to Design Standards**

BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission's work plan for 2015 includes two proposed amendments that involve updates to the design standards section of the Redmond Zoning Code. These two amendments include: 1) the code and policy portion of the Old Town Historic Core Plan and 2) an update to Redmond's Design Standards (RZC Article III) and an update to the Downtown and Overlake Zoning Regulations as they relate to building design).

In brief, the scope and approach for the Historic Core Plan is based on feedback from the 2013 joint City Council and Landmark Commission meeting, interests expressed by property and business owners and existing Comprehensive Plan policy. As requested, staff will provide additional specifics regarding this background.

The Redmond Design Standards date to 1981 when the Design Review Board was first established. Over the years, the policy basis and design standards have been amended and expanded. In 2011, the City of Redmond completed a major rewrite of its Zoning Code. The code was updated primarily to improve overall clarity, conciseness and usability. During the rewrite of the Design Standards portion of the Zoning Code, it became apparent that a simple reorganization and streamlining of the Design Standards would not be sufficient. The Code Rewrite Commission, the body that assisted in the rewrite of the Zoning Code, recommended to the City Council that the existing design standards be set aside and completely rewritten. The City Council concurred with this approach.

In January, the Planning Commission held an initial study session regarding the background, purpose and progress to date on the Historic Core Plan; to seek questions and input on additional topics that should be addressed; and to discuss approach and schedule for consultations as staff is working on the design standards and also for Planning Commission's formal review. In February, the Planning Commission held a joint study session with members of the Landmark Commission and Design Review Board regarding design elements that are key to the character of Old Town and potential approaches to standards for two of these design elements – building materials and base/middle/cap.

FOLLOW UP AND DRAFT PROPOSED PROCESS

At and following the February study session, Planning Commissioners have asked questions about the Council's directive regarding this work, the vision and goal in terms of the look and feel of the Historic

Core, the appropriate level for Planning Commission's discussion, and how best to collaborate with other Boards and Commissions – particularly the Design Review Board.

Commissioner Murray, who is the liaison for the Old Town Historic Core Plan, and staff met to debrief from the February study session and discuss a potential approach for continued work on the design standards for the Historic Core and the Design Standards update overall. The goals were to address the questions and concerns identified during the February study session.

The attached diagram illustrates a draft proposed process for Planning Commission discussion and direction. In summary, the draft proposed process is:

1. Planning Commission Study Session on Framework for Code Update
 - Comprehensive Plan policy basis for Historic Core and Design Standards
 - City Council and community input to date, including direction on design principles
 - Important considerations, such as community interests, economic constraints and development impacts
 - Outcome: questions and potential implications that Planning Commission wants to have considered during the development and review of updates to the design standards

This could occur on April 15 in lieu of the tentative joint meeting with the Landmark Commission and Design Review Board.

2. Staff consults with the Design Review Board regarding draft concepts for updates to Design Standards. One Planning Commissioner would serve as liaison to the Design Review Board and join for these meetings. For the design standards for the Historic Core, the next opportunity for this consultation is on April 16 and we anticipate an additional meeting with the Design Review Board in May. For the update to the rest of the design standards, while we have not yet developed a proposed schedule, we anticipate several meetings with the DRB for initial consult given the scope of the design standards.
3. Staff prepares Technical Committee recommendation for the Planning Commission's review, public hearing and recommendation to City Council.
4. Planning Commission holds study sessions and public hearing on the Technical Committee recommended updates. The analysis provided would include considerations such as the general anticipated impacts for the development community, property owners, residents and Comprehensive Plan policy. One Design Review Board member would join for these meetings and serve as liaison from the Design Review Board. The outcome is the Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the updates.

PREPARATION FOR APRIL 1 DISCUSSION

Please contact Commissioner Murray or Lori Peckol if there are questions in advance.

Attachment: Diagram of Draft Proposed Process for Design Standards Review and Update